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COMICS

# ALIEN WORLDS

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No. 9

RECOMMENDED  
FOR MATURE  
READERS



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## STRATOSPHERIC SCRIBBLINGS

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Dear Bruce and Co.,

High quality adaptations of the work of writers such as Nolan, or Bradbury, Sturgeon and Ellison, are definitely long overdue. Several years ago Ken Steacy did a terrific adaptation of Ellison's "Race for the Stars" in *Epic Illustrated*, and since then I've pretty much waited in vain for someone to follow that lead. Marvel made an abortive attempt at such adaptations in the early seventies with *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction*, where they adapted "If" and "The Day the Earth Stood Still". The problem there was that in adapting the stories to the artistic and intellectual limitations of four-color comics at the time, they lost a lot in translation.

"The Small World of Lewis Saliman", on the other hand, was very well-written and featured the best interior work Corben's done for Pacific to date. Unlike some of his *Twisted Tales* stories, this was the Corben I remember from his early sevenies Warren work.

Finally, I was glad to see George Perez's work. At first it seemed strange to find an artist whose work I so strongly associate with main-stream superhero comics in these pages. But his work here was excellent, as always, and I thought the story worked well.

Well, I gotta go walk my Levi's. Congrats on an outstanding issue.

Michael Sutton  
Convent Station, NJ

Dear Pacific,

I am a Dutch collector of comics. The most comics I buy are European because I think most American stuff is not so good after all. But there are exceptions. I only like comics of the highest quality, and, by George, *Alien Worlds* is highest quality.

I think it is aptly that you are always compared with the old E.C.'s (in Europe, we know the original issues and the present reprints as well). Why should someone dream about old ages when you're living in a new Golden Age of Comics?

Richard Charpentier  
The Netherlands

Dear Bruce Jones:

Since I am an ardent believer in lavishing praise where it is merited, always with the sneaky ulterior motive of reinforcing an already good thing, please accept my shame-faced apologies for not writing sooner to praise your class act, *Alien Worlds*. This comic, more than any other currently vying for continued shelf space in the direct sales arena, is such a

consummated encapsulation of the phrase "sense of wonder" to me, that it's the one indispensable title I haunt the comic racks for above all others.

Like yourself, Bruce, I enjoy a little sex mixed with my science fiction (Brunner's cover for #6, however, is unbelievable), and thus I approve of your decision to affix *AW*, like *Twisted Tales*, with the "Mature Readers" cautionary label. I hope, however, that you will not follow the leads of 1984/84 and *Heavy Metal*, in substituting one for the other. Titillation works best for me when it's used sparingly, in subordination to the more fantastical elements comprising an SF story's characters and milieu.

I wonder also, Bruce, about continuing such a level of quality on so formidable and straitjacketing a writing regimen. Have you considered easing the strain for yourself with other writers? There are at least a few excellent comics writers out there who could do justice to this sort of thing, without diluting the standards you've established (Jan Strnad, for instance, would be perfect). Not only would other writers ease the pressure, but this would give us all a chance to see more fine Bruce Jones artwork! What do you say?

Any chance of snagging Corben to do a science fiction story for a change of pace, in collaboration with either yourself or the above mentioned Jan Strnad?

Mark R. Yanko  
Coronopolis, PA

Dear Bruce,

I was almost used to the new age of comics. Being an ardent reader of just about all the Pacific titles, fantastic stories accompanied by impressive artwork is certainly nothing out of the ordinary. But a single issue containing Richard Corben, Brent Anderson, Gray Morrow and George Perez, PLUS a classic story from William F. Nolan no less! Can it be true??

I cannot express the way I feel about issue seven of *Alien Worlds*. It has enabled Pacific Comics to reach a new high. The quality of artwork and story seems to get better in every single issue, and I hope that you can somehow be able to get more fantasy writers to contribute (like Ellison, Matheson, Niven).

Ever since your emergence into the mainstream of the comics industry you have been compared to E.C., called the new E.C. and have brought back memories to those who used to enjoy E.C. (Me? I'm only seventeen!). In my estimation, you have now surpassed them. Keep up the good work and don't let the quality slide.

Craig Peath  
North Olmsted, Ohio

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MEKONG  
DELTA,  
1971

# 10 DEVE





LIEUTENANT!

GUESS YOU GOT YOUR WISH, LIEUTENANT. FOUND YOURSELF SOME CHARLIE!

SHUT UP AND FOLLOW ME!

YES SIR!



WHAT IS IT, CARR?

MUCHO WEIRD SIGNAL, NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT!



WHAT KIND OF SHOE LEAVES A PRINT LIKE THIS?!



---AND THEY'RE HEADED STRAIGHT UP A RIVER TRAIL ON UP THAT HILL OVER THERE.

HILL 186-- AERIAL RECON HAS BEEN SPOTTING ENEMY MOVEMENT UP THERE FOR DAYS...

AND I'LL BET OUR FUNNY FOOTED FRIENDS ARE PART OF IT!



WELL, THEIR FREE AND EASY LIFE IS FINISHED!

WE'RE GOIN' UP AFTER THEM, WE'LL WIPE THEIR ASSES BUT GOOD!



IT'S A WEAPONS TRACK...

NO SIR...THAT'S FOOTPRINTS, AND NOT JUST FOR ONE WEIRDO NEITHER.

THERE'S AT LEAST TEN WEIRDOS, SQUAD STRENGTH MOVING FAST AND FURIOUS...

CARRYING HEAVY?

MUCHO HEAVY...



OH SWEET AUNT IDA... HERE WE GO HEADED STRAIGHT FOR HANOI...















# The READING!

IN THE EVER-SHIFTING REALITIES THAT LIE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SPACE AND TIME, DREAMS AND CONSCIOUSNESS, A SMALL DRAMA UNFOLDS. WITH TWO BEINGS, FLOATING CALMLY, THEIR THOUGHTS INTENT UPON A LAYOUT OF CARDS.

THE CARDS ARE TAKEN UP, SHUFFLED THREE TIMES, AND THE TOPMOST TURNED OVER. A VOICE ILLUMINATES THE VOID.

THE HANGED MAN IS YOUR SIGNIFICATOR AS IT WAS THE FINAL OUTCOME CARD IN OUR LAST READING.

YES, I KNOW, AND YOU SAID I COULD GET A CLARIFICATION ON IT!

IN THIS NEW POSITION, ITS MEANING IS IGNORANCE TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL... A LIFE OF WASTED EFFORT...

SHALL I CONTINUE?

NO, LET'S SEE THE NEXT CARD!

WHAT DO I CARE OF SPIRITUAL AWARENESS? IT'S THE REAL WORLD THAT COUNTS, NOT THIS CRAZY DREAM!

AS IF IN SLOW MOTION, ANOTHER CARD WAS REVEALED. THE READER SPOKE:

THIS COVERS YOU. IT IS THE FIVE OF SWORDS, A CARD OF EMPTY VICTORY!

VERY WELL, THEN. THIS IS BENEATH YOU, THE SEVEN OF CUPS, AND IT SHOWS A DREAMER OF FALSE DESIRES...

ANY VICTORY IS WORTH HAVING! GO ON!

WITH THE TURN OF ANOTHER CARD, THE READER SAID, "THIS IS BEHIND YOU, THE TEN OF WANDS, AND DEPICTS A MAN CARRYING A HEAVY LOAD."

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, TOO! THAT'S ME, PAYING MY DUES... KISSING THE RIGHT ASSES TO GET TO THE TOP! DON'T THINK IT WAS EASY...

NOT WISHING TO NOTICE THAT THE INSECT HAD NOW BECOME BROODINGNAGLAN IN SIZE, SAM BABBLED ON UNTIL...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CONVINCE ME, S-W-A, BELIEVE ME!

SAM NEVER BELIEVED ANYONE, BUT STILL THAT ETHERAL TONE OF VOICE... BESSIDE, HE NOTICED THAT THE BUG HAD DISAPPEARED!



THIS CARD CROWNS YOU, AND IN THIS POSITION IT MEANS SOMETHING THAT MIGHT ACTUALLY HAPPEN! IT IS THE KNIGHT OF SWORDS.

LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THOSE GODDAM ANTI-NUKIE DINKOS, MAKING IT TOUGH FOR ME TO DO MY JOB!

PERHAPS

SAM'S WORK WASN'T PLEASANT, BUT HE PERFORMED IT EFFICIENTLY. SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL HAD TO BE DISPOSED OF SOMEWHERE... NEVER MIND ITS ULTIMATE EFFECTS. AND IT WAS HIS JOB IN WASHINGTON TO SEE THAT IT WAS DUMPED, SECRETLY IF NECESSARY, ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE.

A NEW CARD HAD BEEN TURNED UP. SAM GULPED WHEN HE FIRST SAW IT.

WHAT'S THIS NOW?

IT'S JUDGMENT, AND IT IS BEFORE YOU.

THAT'S RICH!

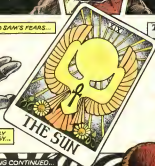
BUT YOU CAN'T SCARE ME THAT EASILY!

NO, SAM, YOU'RE TOO ENLIGHTENED TO BELIEVE IN SUCH THINGS!

THE NEXT CARD PINPOINTED SAM'S FEARS...



IT REPRESENTED TRULY CLEAN COSMIC ENERGY...



TO SAM, IT REPRESENTED THE LOSS OF BILLIONS, AND HIS PRECIOUS JOB!



He said NOTHING!

THE READING CONTINUED...

THIS IS HOW OTHERS SEE YOU. IT IS A CARD OF REJECTION AND REGRET, THE FIVE OF CUPS.

I DON'T EXPECT TO BE LOWER. I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO!

MY ONLY REGRET IS HAVING THIS STUPID DREAM!



WHAT YOU CALL A DREAM WILL BE OVER SOON... BUT FIRST, THE NEXT TO LAST CARD!

I... I... DON'T WANT TO LOOK... PLEASE...



## THE TOWER



SAM COULD NOT KEEP HIS EYES SHUT, AND LOOKED CLOSE, VERY CLOSE.

I'M FALLING! I'LL BE KILLED! PLEASE, NO MORE! THIS IS A NIGHTMARE! HELP ME...



I WANT TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND. THIS IS REALITY, SAM. YOUR LIFE WAS THE NIGHTMARE.



LOOK, SAM, LOOK UPON THE LAST CARD, THE FINAL OUTCOME...



LOOK AT ME, SAM.

DEATH! BUT I'M NOT...

YES, SAM, YOUR BODY DIED LONG AGO, BUT YOUR SOUL STILL REFUSES TO REMEMBER!



MUST I REMIND YOU AGAIN HOW EARTH DIED? HOW YOU AND YOUR FELLOW BUREAUCRATS RENDERED YOUR PLANET LIFELESS WITH SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL AND TOXIC CHEMICALS?

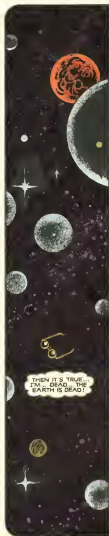
DON'T LEAVE ME HERE ALONE! PLEASE, ANOTHER READING?



SORRY, SAM. YOU'VE ALREADY HAD SEVERAL, AND I HAVE SO MANY MORE TO DO. SO MANY SOULS WHO ALSO NEED TO BE FREED FROM IGNORANCE.

PEACE, SAM, 'TIL THE NEXT TIME AROUND!

**Epilogue:** SUSPENDED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SPACE AND TIME, DREAMS AND CONSCIOUSNESS, A PAIR OF LENSES FLOAT... A VISUAL AID THAT NEVER HELPED ITS OWNER TO SEE, EMANATING ON A PLANE WE CAN NEVER COMPREHEND, SOME INSIGNIFICANT THOUGHTS-- PARTICLES OF AN OBSOLETE BELIEF SYSTEM-- STILL PERSIST!



# THE HERO TOO TOUGH TO DIE!

NICE TRY,  
THOUGH.

R.I.P.  
MICHAEL  
GILBERT

WRITER/EDITOR  
LAYOUTS  
©1984

R.I.P.  
WIN LOBBES  
FINISHED  
ARTIST

R.I.P.  
PACIFIC'S  
VANGUARD  
ILLUSTRATED  
1983-1984

## HE'S BACK!!

AND ECLIPSE HAS HIM!

DOC STEARN

# MR. MONSTER

NOW IN HIS OWN BOOK!

ECLIPSE  
COMICS



ALL THE ANIMALS ARE DEAD.  
NOT EVEN A DOG REMAINS. MAN  
HAS TOTAL CONTROL OVER HIS  
WORLD, SUCH AS IT IS...

IT'S A CRYING SHAME. IF  
YOU'RE RICH AND BORED  
AND NEED SOME SPORT  
AND THERE'S NOTHING LEFT  
TO KILL, WHAT DO YOU DO?  
WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY  
HUNT?

THERE'S ONLY ONE KIND OF GAME LEFT...

# SMALL GAME

I'VE GOT TWO  
TARGETS ON MY  
SCANNER SCREEN.

THEY'RE SOMEWHERE  
UP THERE. DIAL... DIAL?  
HEY DIAL!

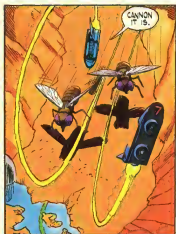
PULL YOUR  
FINGERS OUT OF  
YOUR EARS, WILL YA?

I HEAR YOU,  
BUCK. TOO WELL.

TAKE A LOOK AT  
THAT GORGEOUS  
LANDSCAPE DOWN  
THERE.

REMINDS ME OF  
A BAD LUNCH I HAD  
LAST WEEK.







HEY, DIAL, QUIT  
PLAYING AROUND  
WITH BABY-FACE.



I'M NOT PLAYING  
AROUND...





DAMN! NICE SHOT BUT  
I MADE A MESS OF  
MY TROPHY...



I'VE HAD ENOUGH  
HUNTING FOR ONE  
DAY.

SAME HERE. LET'S  
HEAD BACK TO THE  
LIFT-OFF POINT.

BOOM!



THAT DAMN GREEN SUN.  
I WISH THEY'D CHANGE  
IT TO YELLOW.

TALK TO THE  
GAME OFFICIALS  
ABOUT IT.

YOU BET  
I WILL.



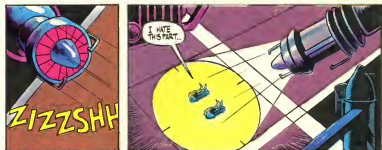
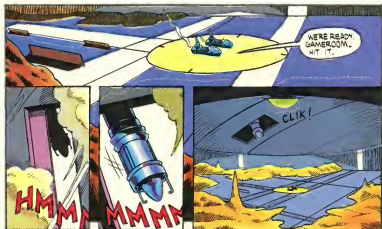
GAMEROOM  
CONTROL. THIS  
IS WALLACE.

ACTIVATE ENLARGER  
AS SOON AS WE REACH  
LIFT-OFF POINT.



THIS IS GAMEROOM  
CONTROL. WE READ  
YOU, MISTER WALLACE.

ENLARGER  
WILL BE  
ACTIVATED.











NEAR THE PERSIAN CITY OF HARRAN, THERE ONCE LIVED A HEALTHY OLD CALIPH NAMED HAROUN ASIM WHO HAD BEEN BLESSED BY ALLAH WITH FOUR BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS: ROSHEN, NASHIM, SHERAZA AND BACHQUET...

OF THESE LOVELY MAIDENS, ASIM LOVED WITH HIS WHOLE HEART ALL BUT BACHQUET, THE YOUNGEST; FOR SHE, AT BIRTH, HAD CAUSED THE DEATH OF HIS FAVORITE WIFE...

NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS A JUST MAN AND WHEN HIS DAUGHTERS REACHED THE AGE OF TWENTY YEARS AND ONE, HE DIVIDED HIS GREAT RICHES EQUALLY AMONG THEM...



THERE YET REMAINED THE QUESTION OF HIS LAND, HOWEVER...

THE CALIPH ASIM'S LOVE FOR HIS DAUGHTERS WAS MATCHED ONLY BY HIS DEVOTION TO HIS LAND AND IN THIS HE SUFFERED A GREAT CONUNDRUM...

FOR, ALTHOUGH HE COULD DISTRIBUTE GUILTLESSLY THE WHOLE OF HIS GOLD AND SILVER, ASIM DID NOT WISH HIS BELOVED PROPERTIES TO BE DIVIDED...

AND THIS HIS NAME, IN TIME FORGOTTEN.

# The MAIDEN AND THE DRAGON

IT WAS THEN HIS TROUBLED LOT TO CHOOSE ONE AMONG HIS DAUGHTERS WHO MOST DESERVED HIS LANDS.

AND WHO WOULD SEE THEY REMAINED UNPARTITIONED AND WITHIN THE ROYAL FAMILY AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, BUT WHICH...

ROSHEN WAS THE ELDEST YET NOT GIVEN TO MATTERS OF BUSINESS...



NASHIM WAS WELL SCHOOLED BUT RARELY THRIFTY...



SHERAZA WAS FRUGAL YET LACKED IN REAL INTELLIGENCE...



BADQUET WAS THE BRIGHTEST OF THE FOUR BUT THE DAUGHTER HE LOVED THE LEAST...

IT HAPPENED THAT ONE HOT SUMMER DAY WHILE ASIM SAT TALKING Musing, AN ANCIENT PEOPLES WOMAN PASSED THE GARDENS OF HIS HOUSE...



...AND REQUESTED OF THE CALIPH A DRINK FROM HIS WELL...

SO IMMERSED WAS HE IN HIS MISERY AND SO IN NEED OF OBJECTIVE OPINION, THAT ASH FLOURED OUT HIS TROUBLED HEART TO HER.



"MY ADVICE IS AS FOLLOWS: TO DISCOVER WHICH OF YOUR DAUGHTERS IS MOST FAITHFUL YOU WILL NEED A DISGUISE. GO TO THE HUT OF THE WITCH WOMAN AMALAH AND ELUOT THAT POTION FROM HER THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOU TEMPORARILY INTO A GREAT SEA DRAGON"...



"THEN MUST YOU APPEAR BEFORE YOUR DAUGHTERS IN THIS GUISE. INSTRUCT EACH OF THEM, UNDER THREAT OF DEATH, TO RETURN TO YOUR HOUSE AND DELIVER UNTO YOU ALL THE RICHES YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON THEM"...



"THAT DAUGHTER WHO, RESISTING GREED, OBEYS THE COMMAND LOYALLY AND RETURNS WITH NOT A SINGLE GOLD PIECE MISSING IS TRULY WORTHY. SHE ALONE LOVES NOT WEALTH FOR ITS OWN SAKE.

...AND SHE ALONE DESERVES INHERITANCE OF YOUR LAND"...



IT WAS THE CUSTOM OF THE CAULP'S FOUR GIRLS TO FREQUENT A PRIVATE BEACH OF THEIR FATHER'S DOMAIN ON ALL THE SUMMER DAYS...





IT WAS ON JUST SUCH AN AFTERNOON, WHILE GAMBOING PLAYFULLY IN THE COOL SURF, THAT THE FOUR MAIDENS BEHELD A LOATHSOME SEA DRAGON RISING FROM THE TUMBLING FOAM BEFORE THEM...

"HALT AS YOU STAND!" THE MONSTER COMMANDED, "OR I SHALL EAT YOU ON THE SPOT!"

THE FOUR SISTERS FREEZE IN TERROR AT THE EDGE OF THE BEACH...

TOO FRIGHTENED TO THINK, ROSHEN RUSHED FROM THE BEACH AS SHE WAS TOLD.

WHEN THE ELDEST DAUGHTER FAILED TO RETURN TO THE BEACH, THE SEA DRAGON THEN TURNED TO THE SECOND DAUGHTER, NASHIM.

THEN, TO ROSHEN, THE ELDEST, HE SAID: "GO HITHER TO YOUR HOME AND BRING ME ALL THE GOLD THAT IS YOURS AND I SHALL SPARE YOUR LIFE AND THAT OF YOUR SISTERS..."

YET UPON ARRIVING AT HOME, SHE DESIRED NOT TO DEPART FROM THE RICHES GIVEN HER, GATHERING THEM UP IN HER ARMS. SHE RUED BOTH THE HOUSE OF ASHM AND THE LAND IN SHAME AND TERROR...

"GO HITHER TO YOUR HOME AND BRING ME ALL THE GOLD THAT IS YOURS AND I SHALL SPARE BOTH YOU AND YOUR REMAINING SISTERS!" ...

OBEYING QUICKLY, WASHIM FLED THE BEACH. YET, UPON ARRIVING, SHE TOO WAS OVERCOME WITH THE DESIRE TO KEEP HER RICHES... IN SHAME AND FEAR SHE FLED BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE LAND...



NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN.

WHEN THE SECOND DAUGHTER FAILED TO RETURN TO THE BEACH, THE SEA DRAGON TURNED TO SHERAZA.



GO HITHER TO YOUR HOME AND BRING ME ALL THE GOLD THAT IS YOURS AND I SHALL SPARE BOTH YOUR LIFE AND THAT OF YOUR REMAINING SISTER...



YET WHEN SHERAZA ARRIVED AT THE GREAT HOUSE OF ASIM, SHE TOO GATHERED UP HER FORTUNE AND FLED THE LAND, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN...



THE SEA DRAGON THEN TURNED TO THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER, BACHQUET: 'GO HITHER TO YOUR HOME AND BRING ALL THE GOLD THAT IS YOURS AND I SHALL SPARE YOUR LIFE AND REWARD YOU GREATLY...

BACHQUET THEN DEPARTED THE BEACH...

IN BUT A BRIEF TIME, THE DRAGON BEHELD THE DAUGHTER BACHQUET RETURNING DOWN THE BEACH. 'YOU ALONE RETAIN THE COURAGE AND HONOR TO RULE AN EMPIRE,' SAID THE DRAGON AS BACHQUET REACHED INTO HER HEAVILY WEIGHTED SATCHEL...



BUT IT WAS NOT GOLD COINS SHE WITHDREW FROM HER SATCHEL... BUT A LONG GLEAMING SWORD...



WITH WHICH SHE PROMPTLY SLEW THE DRAGON...



AS HE LAY DYING ON THE BEACH, HIS BLOOD MIXING WITH THE FOAMING SURF, OLD ASIM WHISPERED TO HIS DAUGHTER:

"IT IS I, ASIM, YOUR FATHER! I WOULD NOT HAVE BELIEVED THAT THE DAUGHTER I LOVED THE LEAST WOULD PROVE TO BE THE MOST FAITHFUL..."



BAGHQUET THEN SMILED WITH DARK CUNNING AND REPLIED...

"I WAS NOT MY FAITH, DEAR FATHER, BUT MY WITS..."

"YOUR LACK OF LOVE FOR ME WAS MATCHED ONLY BY MINE FOR THIS..."

AND SAYING THIS, SHE THEREUPON PRODUCED FROM HER SATCHEL THE TATTERED CLOAK, GRAYING WIG AND WRINKLED MASK OF AN OLD PEDDLER WOMAN...



End



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